

V. Ocean Resources

The 1982 Law of the Sea Convention

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is a comprehensive international treaty affecting the regulation of all ocean spaces. The treaty is a result of over 14 years of work involving participation by more than 150 countries representing all regions of the world, all legal and political systems, and all degrees of social-economic development and geographic configuration. The document consists of seventeen parts and nine annexes, and contains provisions governing a range of subject areas including the limits of national jurisdiction over ocean areas, access to the sea, navigation, protection and preservation of the marine environment, exploitation of living resources and conservation, scientific research, seabed mining and other exploitation of nonliving resources, and the settlement of disputes.

Of particular importance to the Micronesian entities are the provisions relating to the following ocean areas: internal waters, the territorial sea, archipelagic waters, the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, and the exclusive economic zone. Excerpts from Bernard Oxman's article on "The New Law of the Sea" published in the American Bar Association Journal in February 1983 provide a good summary of those provisions: